

# **NATIONAL URBAN SURVEY**

## **Civic perceptions on Socio-political Issues**

June 2007

## The Methodology of the Survey

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Between the 5th and 8th of June, 1194 individuals over the age of 18 living in the urban areas of the country participated in a nation-wide survey. The accumulation of data was made possible through individual interviews utilizing a paper-based questionnaire. The one-on-one interviews had a time duration of 15 minutes allowing for the spread of the poll in all the urban territory of the country's prefectures. The sample size of the survey has a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of  $\pm 3\%$ . The selection of participants in this survey was realized through the method of quotas divided according to gender and age group.

The following analysis examines this public opinion survey's main findings. This initiative was undertaken by the European Stability Initiative (ESI), a think tank organization stationed in Berlin-Istanbul-Brussels. ESI closely monitors development issues concerning the European Integration of countries aspiring membership in the European Union. Within the time span of a year, ESI has established collaboration with several Albanian organizations working in the field of European integration, social and economic development, legal implementation, as well as other issues. ESI also works in partnership with several organizations in the region which come from countries like Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Rumania, and Bulgaria.

In the assessment of the public sentiment, ESI was aided by the AGENDA Institute, an Albanian think-tank which dedicates a portion of its work to the conduct of nationwide polls that evaluate the public opinion on different issues. AGENDA's experiences in this field of research are characterized by successful partnerships with international organizations.

Consequently, this survey indicates the urban public opinion during the time the investigation was conducted.

## MAIN RESULTS

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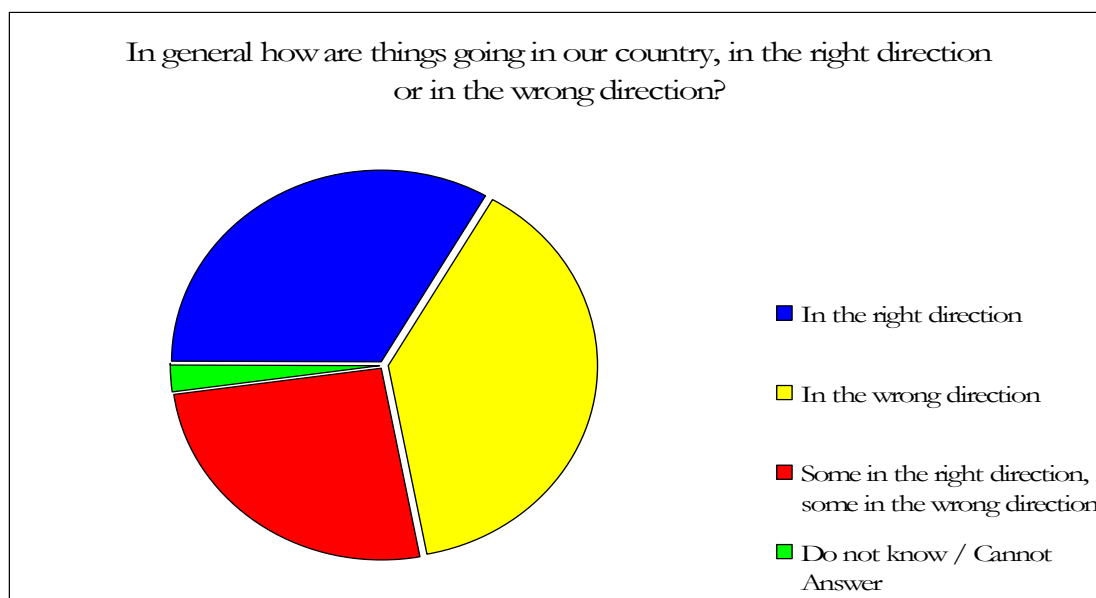
### General impression on overall developments

The survey shows that under a general understanding, most citizens have a hard time assessing whether things are going in the right or wrong direction. 38% of the participants find themselves amidst this dilemma. A portion of 33% reported that they believe things are moving in the right direction, while another 26% reported the opposite claiming that things are generally going in the wrong direction.

**Table 1: General impression**

In general how are things going in our country, in the right direction or in the wrong direction?	
	Percent
In the right direction	33.3
Some in the right direction, some in the wrong direction	38.6
In the wrong direction	26.0
Do not know / Cannot Answer	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Graph 1: General impression**



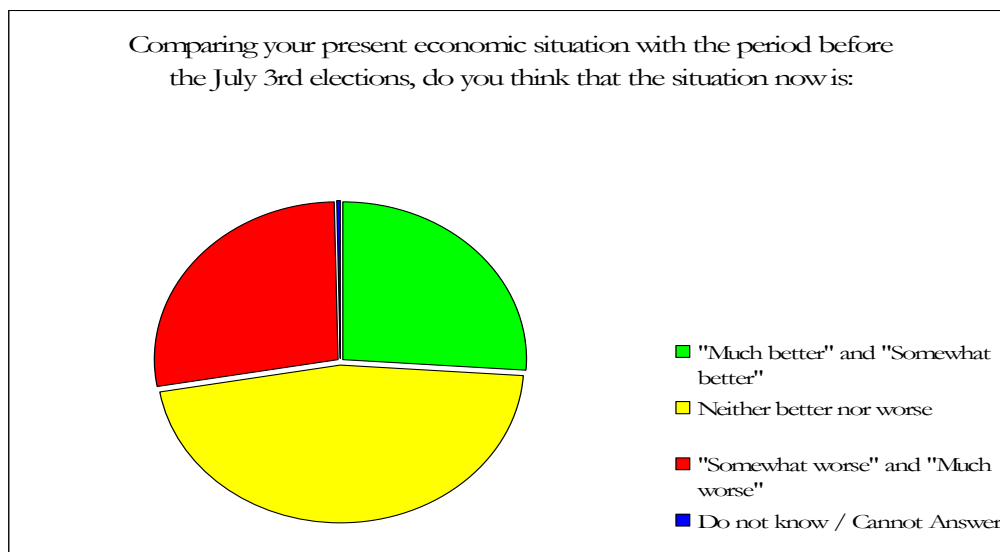
## The economic situation

The assessment of the financial situation of participants was compared to the period prior to July 3rd of 2005. Only 26% of the interviewed reported that their financial situation had improved. Another 27% reported that their situation had aggravated. The rest of the interviewed, approximately 46%, reported no changes of their financial situation. Although this question is closely tied to the way the participants perceive their economic situation rather than direct measurement of their financial earnings and economic wellbeing, it remains indicative of the fact that the portion of the population which endures economic hardship have a difficult time surpassing the situation they find themselves in.

**Table 2: The Economic Situation**

Comparing your present economic situation with the period before the July 3rd elections, do you think that the situation now is:	
	Percent
"Much better" and "Somewhat better"	26.1
Neither better nor worse	46.0
"Somewhat worse" and "Much worse"	27.5
Do not know / Cannot Answer	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Graph 2: The economic situation**



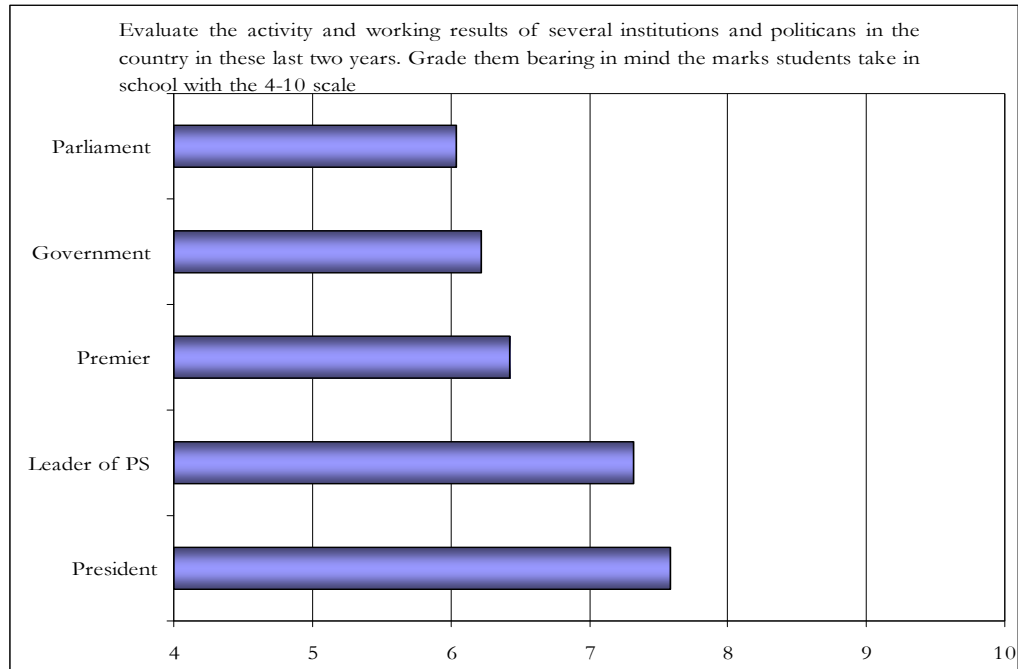
### The evaluation of the work of institutions

To evaluate the work of important institutions, the interviewed were asked to assign a numerical grade, using a scale of 4 to 10. The institution of the President enjoyed the highest grade of 7.6, while the leader of the Socialist Party was ranked second with a grade of 7.3. Also, most participants interviewed reported believing that the Prime Minister's performance was generally better than that of his cabinet. They assign him a grade of 6.4 compared to the 6.2 they assign to the work of his cabinet. The work of the parliament is ranked last being assigned a numerical grade of 6. Although our representative sample performed a general evaluation of the work of institutions, as far as the performance of the government in power is concerned, only 4.9% of the interviewed assign the highest grades, while 16,4% assign negative ones. This situation of high and negative grades is manifested differently regarding the work of the parliament, which was assigned the highest grade by only 2% of the interviewed. Contrary to the above, the institution of the President was assigned the highest grade by 18.4% of the interviewed while receiving negative grades by 5.8% of them.

**Table 3: The evaluation of the work of institutions**

Below you are asked to evaluate the activity and working results of several institutions and politicians in the country in these last two years. Grade them bearing in mind the marks students take in school with the 4-10 scale, where 4 is very bad (failure) and 10 is very good, while 5-9 express performance in between the two extremes:	
	Average Mark
The work of the President of the Republic during his 5 year mandate	7.6
The work of the Leader of the Socialist Party	7.3
The work of the Premier in the last 2 years	6.4
The work of government in the last 2 years	6.2
The work of the Parliament in the last 2 years	6.0

**Graph 3: The evaluation of the work of institutions**



### **Public perceptions of the current President of the Republic**

Generally, individual perceptions on the current President of the Republic were ranked as positive alternatives. An approximate 76% of the interviewed reported thinking that he is fair and impartial and a similar portion of 77% believe he has been a warrant of constitutional standards. Likewise, 73% of the interviewed believe he has worked within the constitutional framework. The public perception that the president has acted in partisanship with the opposition, or that he has acted on behalf of his personal interests, has been relatively low, respectively 28% and 22%. Also, 63% of the interviewed do not believe that he has hindered government reforms.

**Table 4: Public perceptions of the current president of the republic**

According to your view, how do the sentences I'll read below best describe the President of the Republic, Alfred Moisiu:					
	Very Good	Somehow good	Not that good	Not at all good	No response
He is just and independent	41%	35%	15%	7%	2%
He has defended the constitution	44%	33%	14%	5%	4%
He has taken sides with the opposition	10%	18%	29%	38%	6%
He has acted for personal interests	8%	14%	24%	47%	8%
He has been blocking reforms	12%	18%	21%	42%	6%
He has acted within the constitutional framework.	42%	31%	16%	6%	4%
He has performed well and should be reelected	34%	24%	19%	20%	3%

### *Preferences for the President*

At 34%, the interviewed favor Bamir Topi as the future president of the country. He is closely followed by the current president, Alfred Moisiu, at 32%. Fatos Nano is ranked third with 11.7%. The percentile ranking for other public figures shows that other potential candidates are far from being projected in post of the President.

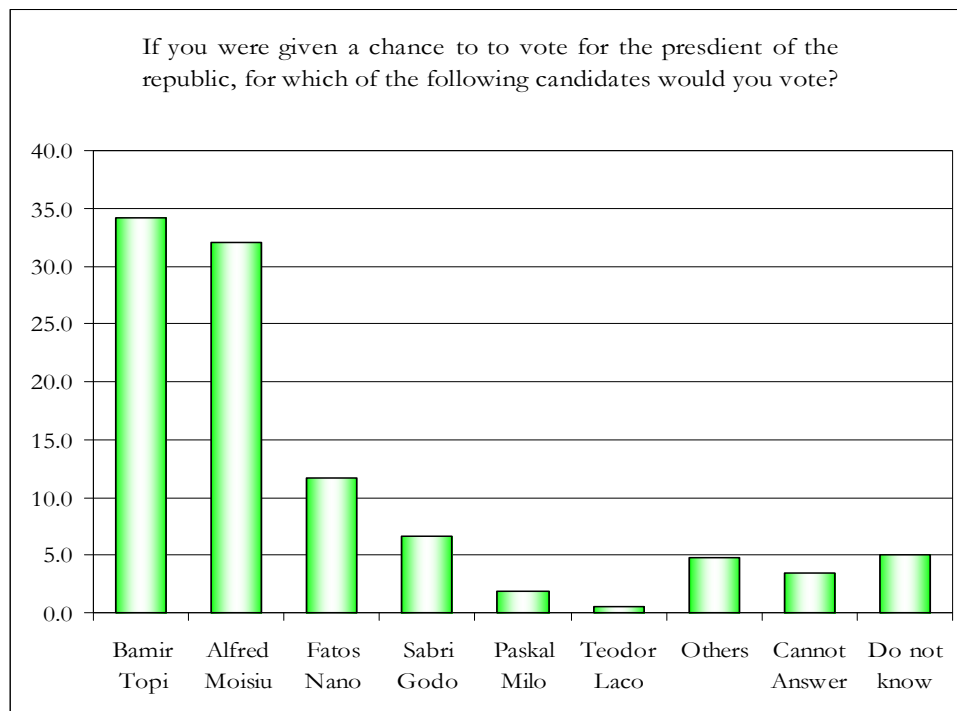
Apart from their perception of the future president, the interviewed report having personal political belonging. Generally, Bamir Topi is a favorable candidate among individuals who identify themselves politically as right-wing. On the other hand, Alfred Moisiu is voted from individuals who report having diverse political "sympathies".

Individuals who proclaim sympathy for the socialists voted for Alfred Moisiu and Fatos Nano, most of whom voted for Alfred Moisiu. On the other hand, individuals who sympathize with the democrats mostly chose Bamir Topi. Specifically, 83% of this group voted for him. Interviewers who expressed sympathy for the SMI Party are divided between the three candidates. They mostly express high regards for the current president while showing similar levels of appraisal for Bamir Topi and Fatos Nano. It is important to reiterate that the survey sample is urban and represents the perceptions of the public during which the interviews are taken.

**Table 5: Preferences for the President**

If you were given a chance to vote for the president of the republic, for which of the following candidates would you vote?	
	Percent
Bamir Topi	34.1
Alfred Moisiu	32.0
Fatos Nano	11.7
Sabri Godo	6.6
Paskal Milo	1.9
Teodor Laco	0.5
Others	4.8
Cannot Answer	3.5
Do not know	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Graph 4: Preferences for the President**





## SUMMARY OF THE PERCEPTIONS ON POLITICAL SITUATION

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### The level of trust in institutions

Asked on the scale of trust in different institutions of the country, the urban population still shows a high level of trust in international institutions which lead the ranking in the table, as well as the first tier of institutions which enjoy high public trust. In this group, NATO (80) ranks first, followed by the European Union (78) and OSCE (67).

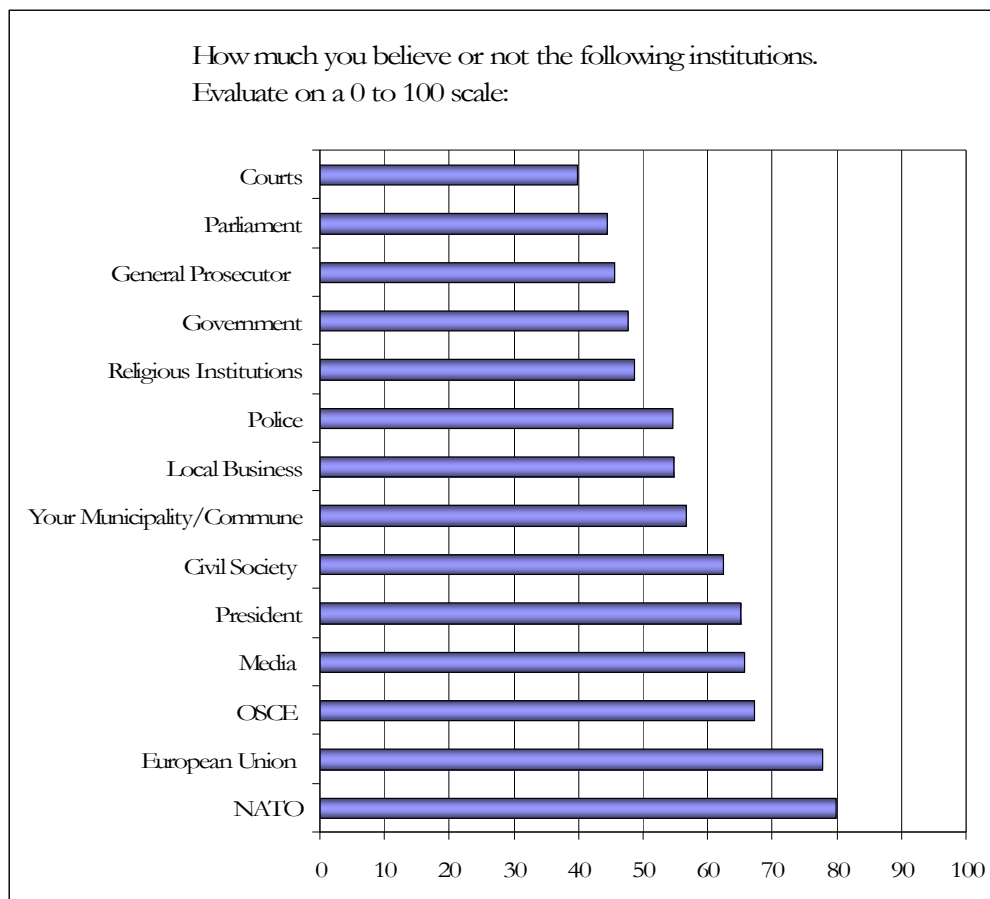
The findings show a second tier or group of institutions reflecting public trust. This group is composed by the Media (66), the President of the Republic (65), and Civil Society (63). Although it ranks second, this group represents the highest level of public trust among national institutions.

The institutions which show low levels of public trust remain the Religious Institutions (49), the Government (48), the General Prosecutor's Office (46), and at the end of the list the Parliament (44), and the Judiciary (40).

**Table 6: The level of trust in institutions**

How much you believe or not the following institutions. Evaluate on a 0 to 100 scale:	
	Evaluation
NATO	80
European Union	78
OSCE	67
Media	66
President	65
Civil Society	63
Your Municipality/Commune	57
Local Business	55
Police	55
Religious Institutions	49
Government	48
General Prosecutor	46
Parliament	44
Courts	40

**Graph 5: The level of trust in institutions**



### **Voters Preferences**

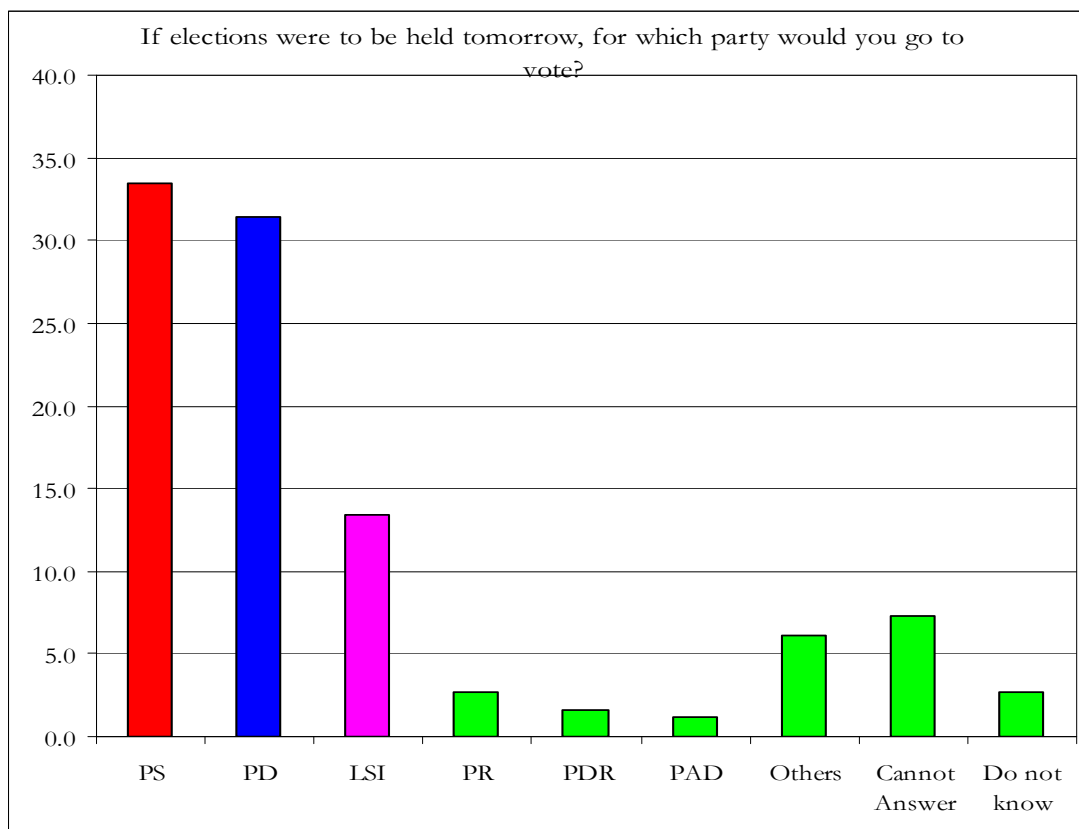
Asked for which party would they vote if elections would be held the next day, 33,5% of the interviewed replied that they would vote for the Socialist Party, 31,5% for the Democratic Party, 13,5 for the Socialist Movement for Integration, and 2,7% for the Republican Party. The remaining parties which received less than 1% are groups under the category “Other”.

We restate once more that the sample represents only the opinion of the urban population in Albania.

**Table 7: Voters Preferences**

If elections were to be held tomorrow, for which party would you go to vote?	
	Percent
Socialist Party (PS)	33.5
Democratic Party (PD)	31.5
Socialist Movement for Integration (LSI)	13.5
Republican Party (PR)	2.7
New Democratic Party (PDR)	1.7
Democratic Alliance (PAD)	1.1
Others	6.1
Cannot Answer	7.3
Do not know	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Graph 6: Voters Preferences**



## Method of the President's elections

As for the way through which the President should be elected, the data clearly reflects that the majority of the interviewers think that the President should be elected directly from the people. This answer corresponds to the low level of public trust in the Parliament.

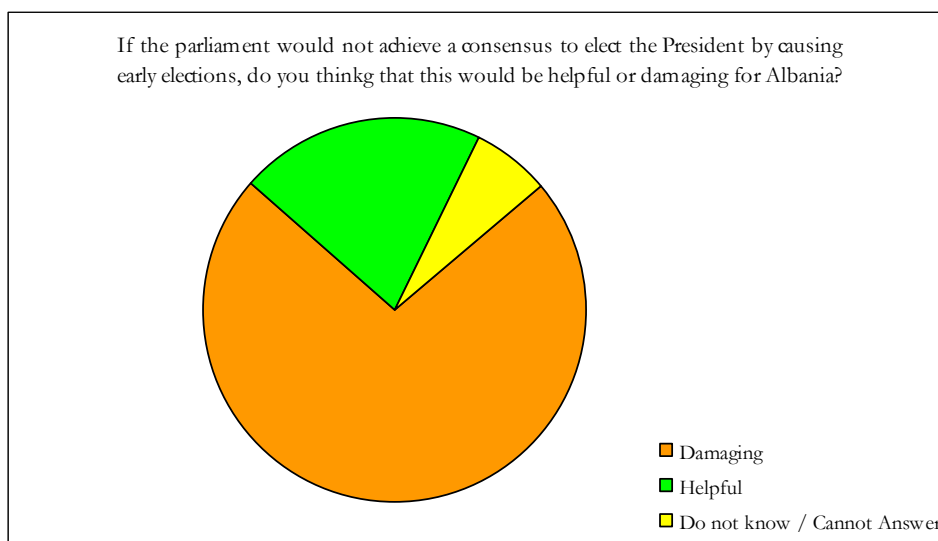
## The failure of the President's Election Process

The inability to achieve political consensus for the President's election and the causation of early elections as a direct effect was reported as harmful for Albania by 72.5% of the interviewed. Only 20,7% of those interviewed thought that holding early elections would prove to be advantageous for Albania.

**Table 8: The failure of the President's Election Process**

If the parliament would not achieve a consensus to elect the President by causing early elections, do you think that this would be helpful or damaging for Albania?	
	Percent
Damaging	72.5
Helpful	20.7
Do not know / Cannot Answer	6.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Graph 7: The failure of the President's Election Process**



**Table 9: The failure of the President's Election Process**

If the parliament would not achieve a consensus for the election of the president, would you blame the government or the opposition?	
	Percent
Government	46.3
Opposition	34.4
Do not know / Cannot Answer	19.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Graph 8: The failure of the President's Election Process**

